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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 154555

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [IR](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE: EU HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE WITH IRAN

Classified By: EUR/FO KVOLKER for reasons 1.4 b & d

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The EU has recently expressed interest in resuming its human rights dialogue with Iran. This cable provides guidance on supporting that dialogue providing certain conditions are met, and requests that post demarche the EU to issue statements on two Iranian political activists. USEU, Embassy Lisbon, and Embassy Ljubljana are requested to deliver the points in paragraph two to appropriate contacts. END SUMMARY.

OBJECTIVES

12. (SBU) Begin Objectives.

-- Note that we value the EU,s cooperation in assisting human rights activists and defenders in Iran.

-- Note that the United States does not oppose the EU re-establishing a human rights dialogue with Iran in principle.

-- Request that the EU establish concrete measurable goals for such a dialogue, keep the dialogue at a sub-ministerial level, and strictly limit discussions to human rights only. Strongly urge that the EU avoid offering the Iranians dialogue or engagement in any other areas in return for their acceptance of renewed human rights dialogue.

--Concrete goals should address, but are not limited to, increasing the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and religion; increasing freedom of the press; ending discrimination against women and minorities; halting executions for juvenile offenders and fewer restrictions on civil society organizations.

-- Note that the USG shares the EU,s concern about the plight of political prisoners in Iran, as reflected most recently in Ambassador Khalilzad,s speech before the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, October 31, and continues to be concerned about the situation for human rights defenders in Iran.

-- Thank the EU for its recent public comments on the cases of Emad Baghi, Adnan Hassanpour, and Abdolwahed Butimer, and Mansour Osanloo.

-- Request that the EU express concern to the Iranian government about the arrests and detention of Mohammed Salehi and Abbas Khorsandi.

-- Note that Salehi and Khorsandi have serious physical ailments that need treatment and professional care.

BACKGROUND

13. Begin Background.

(C) Both the upcoming Slovenian Presidency and the European Commission are interested in re-starting the EU,s Human Rights Dialogue with Tehran. The EU,s previous human rights dialogue ended in June 2004 after the EU criticized Iran,s 2004 parliamentary elections. That dialogue had consisted of high-level meetings with Khatami,s government as well as lower level roundtables.

(C) Department is concerned Iran would use a human rights dialogue to criticize the United States and Israel on human rights rather than address their own problems, and notes that since the beginning of the Ahmadi-Nejad administration, Iran has sent notorious human rights violators to international meetings on human rights. In 2006, the regime sent Saeed Mortazavi, the Tehran special prosecutor, to represent the country at the opening of the U.N. Human Rights Council. It also sent Interior Minister Mostafa Purmohammadi in 2006 as its representative for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Both Mortazavi and Purmohammadi have extensive histories of human rights abuses, including involvement in the killing of Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, and participating in the 1988 mass execution of several thousand

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political prisoners. However, a dialogue that included meetings in Tehran could provide space for NGOs in Iran to discuss human rights. The USG could support the EU,s human rights dialogue if the EU:

- Establishes concrete goals for the dialogue. What does the EU hope to achieve with this dialogue?
- Keeps discussions at the sub-ministerial level to avoid legitimizing the regime,s human rights record and to avoid contact with some of the worst offenders.
- Limits discussions to human rights only.
- Does not offer any concessions in other areas in exchange for the dialogue.

(U) The USG shares the EU,s concern on the human rights situation in Iran, and has made multiple recent statements condemning Iran,s treatment of political prisoners in particular in the last three months. Most recently, for this year,s UN speech on human rights, the United States Government decided to emphasize the human rights situation for political prisoners. On Iran, Ambassador Khalilzad noted that &In Iran this year, the harassment, arrest and, in some cases, torture of journalists, dissidents, academics, and writers increased notably. The recent, violent crackdown on labor leaders including Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi has been particularly egregious. Human rights defenders such as Emad Baghi and dissident clerics such as Ayatollah Boroujerdi remain imprisoned. The authorities also targeted for persecution women,s rights activists and persons advocating for an end to discrimination based on religion and ethnicity.⁸ The EU has publicly commented on the cases of Baghi on November 6, Hassanpour and Butimer on October 23, and External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner mentioned Osanloo in a recent speech to the European Parliament.

(SBU) In addition to the above cases, the US is seeking to coordinate with the EU in issuing statements on the following two activists:

- Abbas Khorsandi is a political activist who was arrested on September 9 in his home in Firuzkuh, Tehran province. He was previously arrested in early 2005 and held for several weeks. He may be/have been a member of the Democratic Party

of Iran; we cannot confirm membership. In 2005, HRW issued a press release noting his arrest. Khorsandi has had a history of heart attacks and suffers from diabetes. Amnesty International has confirmed that five others were arrested on the same day in Tehran and Sanandaj: Meisam Roudaki, Bahram Rasekhifar, Mansour Faraji and Ghasem Shirzadian and Sepideh Puragha, i.

--Mahmoud Salehi is serving a one year prison sentence in Sanandaj for organizing a 2004 May Day celebration. He was examined by a hospital specialist on October 22 for high blood pressure and heart problems resulting from the lack of treatment for his kidney related ailments.

(U) End Background.

POINT OF CONTACT

14. (SBU) The POC for this request is Kate Lurie in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (202-647-4753).
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